

Peace. So often we define it by what it is not. The world thinks of peace as something that only happens in the absence of strife and trouble.

*“Once this project is turned in, I’ll be at **peace**”*

*“I can finally get some **peace** when the kids take a nap.”*

*“It’s hard to be at **peace** with so much chaos in the world.”*

See what I mean. I bet we’ve all said something like this. But as followers of Jesus, we have the promise of something far greater. We have the promise of a peace that is real and exists in the face of strife and trouble, not only when those things are lifted.

The priestly blessing for God’s people in ancient times speaks of a peace that has some real substance to it.

*The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.*

Numbers 6:24-26 [NRSV]

Peace is this blessing is not dependent upon the removal of strife and trouble. Peace was a gift given by God. Peace happened when the Lord showed up and looked upon his people!

Mark 4 records an amazing story about this type of peace. While a raging storm causes chaos on the deck of the boat and in the hearts of Jesus’ disciples, he rests easily at the back of the boat because he has this peace. When his disciples rouse him, he calms the storm.

*He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea,
“Peace! Be still!” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm.*

Mark 4: 39 [NRSV]

Peace is not some passive trait that creeps in once the storm is calmed. The presence of overwhelming peace that Jesus brought to bear is the very power that calms the storm. Peace happened with the Lord showed up and looked upon the situation!

In some of his last words, Jesus makes two promise statements.

*I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me.
Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows.
But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”*

John 16: 33 [NLT]

- 1.) On earth, we will have trial and sorrow.
- 2.) Jesus has overcome

But notice that peace does not come only as a result of Jesus' victory over the world. Peace happens in the midst of the trials and sorrows IN HIM.

As we face ongoing trials and sorrows, take heart. The Lord has shown his face and is looking upon his people.

God, we ask your blessing upon our community and our world. In a world full of trials and sorrows, we look to you for peace. We rely on the power of Jesus to overcome this world. We look to the Holy Spirit for guidance through turbulent time. Bless us and keep us. Make your face to shine upon us, and be gracious to us. Lift your face upon us, and give us peace. amen